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Issue 13 | December 2007

360Zine

Free Magazine For Xbox 360 Gamers. *Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...*

MASSIVE REVIEW 

MASS EFFECT

A giant step for videogames? Bioware blasts onto the 360



REVIEWED 

CoD4

Better than Halo 3?



PREVIEW 

THE CLUB

Top gun-toting action



REVIEWED 

ASSASSIN'S CREED

Stunning action adventure

PLUS...



1 NFS: PRO STREET 
More pedal



2 ACE COMBAT 6 
Take to the skies



3 SCENE IT? 
We'll have you...?

PLUS LOADS MORE!

HELP 

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TOGGLE FULL SCREEN VIEW 

NEXT PAGE 



Welcome to 360Zine



The final sprint to Christmas is upon us, so it's no great surprise that we have a stocking full of videogaming goodness to tuck into this issue. Mass Effect has been bleeping steadily on the 360Zine radar, and the finished article doesn't disappoint. It's good to see games that continue to stretch the boundaries of what has come before, and Bioware has pulled this one off with aplomb. In addition there's the small matter of Call of Duty 4 and Assassin's Creed - both astonishingly good and arguably must-buys as the nights draw in. The festive season is never a time for penny pinching, but with a slew of Triple A titles lining up for your folding stuff, your friends and family might have to make do with a card.

Enjoy the holidays, enjoy the issue... And see you in 2008.

Dan Hutchinson, Editor
360zine@gamerzines.com

**MAGAZINE
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to
tell us what
you think of
the magazine.

Don't miss! This month's top highlights



Ace Combat 6
Flying high PAGE 31



WIN!
Xbox 360 Elite
PAGE 35



The Club
PREVIEW &
INTERVIEW Page 11



QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

Dead Space
Turok
Fifa Street
Burnout Paradise
Devil May Cry 4
Brothers In Arms:
Hell's Highway
Fracture
Mercenaries 2
The Club
Mass Effect
Call of Duty 4
Assassin's Creed
Need For Speed
Scene It?
Ace Combat 6
XBLA

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We recommend you close and re-open the magazine and select "Play" when asked about the multimedia to enjoy the magazine as intended.

MEET THE TEAM

Probably the
best games
writers on the
planet



Steve Hill

Need for Speed is back again. Steve has followed the series since day one...



Richard Melville

Looking a tad pasty Rich has been immersed in Modern Warfare.



Ian Morris

He begged us to review Ace Combat 6. How can you refuse?



Chris Schilling

Chris has been dying to see Mass Effect. You can read his review on page 16.

DEAD SPACE

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: In-house
(Redwood Shores studio)
Heritage: The Godfather,
The Simpsons Game
Link: <http://www.ea.com/deadspace/>
ETA: Q3 2008

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to
tell us what
you think of
Dead Space!

**"The critters
require different
tactics to dispose
of them"**

We'd have preferred a game with
fewer enemies, simply because the
empty ship is incredibly creepy...

...having said that, the aliens you do
meet are truly nightmarish creations.

There's plenty of blood
and guts for gorehounds,
too. And it looks stunning.

FIRST LOOK

Dead Space

In your living room, everyone can hear you scream...

What's the story?

Perhaps we're being a little presumptuous, but it's looking a lot like Event Horizon: The Videogame. With an extremely creepy-looking trailer currently doing the rounds, we've got high hopes for this, even though it's a good way off just yet.

What do we know?

The story sounds eerily familiar - a small inspection crew is sent to investigate a gigantic communications vessel which has become strangely silent. Naturally, there's a reason things are so quiet, and it's down to the terrifying alien creatures secreted inside its otherwise deserted interiors. And those critters require different tactics to dispose of them. With some it's best to hack their limbs off first, while you should avoid shooting open the stomach of others, lest you disturb the human-killing leeches roaming around their innards. With nothing but an electric mining tool to dismember your foes, you'll spend as much time legging it from their extra-terrestrial clutches as you do chopping their chitinous carapaces.

When do we get more?

A demo will surely be in the offing but not until after summer. We're hoping to get a more detailed look in a few months' time though - watch this space.

Anything else to declare?

From what we've seen, the sound design is phenomenal - the Alien-aping score is sparse but chillingly effective.

ABSOLUTE AERIAL SUPREMACY

WEAPONS UNLOCKED 23RD NOVEMBER

ACE COMBAT™ 6

Fires of Liberation

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to say this is the best one yet."

Games Radar 9/10



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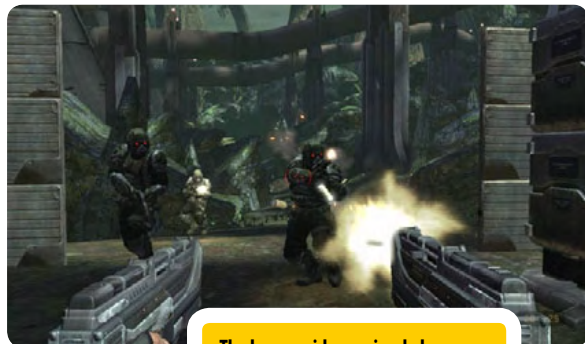
TUROK

Publisher: Touchstone
Developer: Propaganda Games
Heritage: None
Link: <http://www.turok.com/>
ETA: Q1 2008

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Turok



We're not sure it's wise to antagonise a T-Rex, but Turok is a bit of an expert at these things. And he's got a massive gun.



"Use dinosaurs to your advantage against the many humanoid enemies"

The humanoid enemies do bear a close resemblance to the Hellghast in Sony's Killzone. All the more reason to kill 'em, we guess.



Why aren't there more games where you get to take on huge dinosaurs? It's a mystery to us.

FIRST LOOK

Turok

Everybody kill the dinosaur

What's the story?

After the collapse of Acclaim, many thought that 2002's Turok Evolution was the last we'd see of the original dinosaur-hunting franchise. Fortunately Touchstone (more well-known for their work in the film industry than in videogaming) have picked up the license, and thanks to developer Propaganda Games, we'll be seeing a return to sauropod-slaying action early in the New Year.

What do we know?

Dinosaurs aren't your main foes, but rather a neutral force that you can use to your advantage against the many humanoid enemies. You can draw raptors towards you, and then sneakily hide while they clamp their jaws around the bad guys - which, let's face it, sounds all kinds of awesome. The combat has two different approaches - you can use guns for a more action-based approach, or if you're a fan of creeping through undergrowth then you can use the more stealthy bow and arrow, or machete your unsuspecting opponents to death. The former is our favourite, given that you can pin them to a tree with a successful hit.

When do we get more?

Very soon, with any luck. We're still waiting on a concrete UK release date, but it'll likely be shortly after its early February launch Stateside.

Anything else to declare?

Touchstone's film connections have helped them secure a star-studded line-up for the voice acting with Timothy Olyphant, Ron Perlman, Donnie Wahlberg and William Fichtner all contributing to the cutscenes.



FIFA Street 2

Publisher: EA Sports

Developer: EA Canada

Heritage: FIFA series, Need
for Speed series

Link: No link yet, sorry!

ETA: Q2 2008

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to
tell us what
you think of
Fifa Street 3

The caricatures are absolutely spot-on, and a welcome change from the rather creepy pseudo-realistic models in standard FIFA.

Ronaldinho and chums are clearly the best side to choose - no-one has more tricks than the Brazilians.

FIRST LOOK

FIFA Street 3

EA hit the streets with a brand new look

What's the story?

It's one of the most derided concepts in videogaming, but the FIFA Street series is massively popular. It's not bad either - despite the critical brickbats, it plays a solid game of showboat-style footy. If it's never quite rivalled its street basketball and gridiron compatriots, then this year looks like the first time the quality will match the sales figures.

What do we know?

Check out the shots, and you'll immediately notice the first major difference. The new exaggerated player caricatures are a much more appealing look for the game, and they're superbly animated too. In fact, the models are more recognisable as the real-life players than before. Check out Stevie G! With simpler controls making it easier to pull off even the trickier moves like overhead kicks, and specific features for each pitch (walls on certain arenas can be used to jump off), it's looking like this will progress the series much more than the second.

When do we get more?

Bizarrely, it looks like our American brethren are getting the game before us, with a late February debut. Hopefully there'll be a demo on the Marketplace soon so we can see whether its new features make a significant difference to the gameplay.

Anything else to declare?

Reactive music increases in speed and volume when you use a Gamebreaker, which is another nice touch.

There are plenty of new moves to master, though the new, more intuitive controls should make them a doddle to figure out.

INCOMING

A fistful of top new titles coming to 360...



Burnout Paradise

Publisher: EA | **ETA:** 25th January 2008

Paradise looks like a complete reboot for the Burnout Series after the disappointing Revenge, with a free-roaming city to drive around in and a new online system that allows you to instantly join your pals in a race with no waiting. Test Drive Unlimited with crashes, anyone?



Devil May Cry 4

Publisher: Capcom | **ETA:** February 2008

Capcom's blistering scrapper makes its current-gen bow in February, and anti-hero Dante's looking better than ever. A wealth of new moves, some absolutely stonking graphics and that same addictively complex fighting means the next two months are going to seriously drag.

Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway

Publisher: Ubisoft | **ETA:** 1st February 2008

Our favourite WWII squad-based shooter series returns with a new generation makeover, and plenty of new features. With destroyable cover, new tactics to deploy and a brand new story and setting, hopefully Gearbox can provide a serious rival to COD4.



Dark Sector

Publisher: D3 Publisher | **ETA:** 25th January 2008

This dark third-person shooter is reminiscent of Gears of War in a modern-day setting. With a sinister plot seeing you take control of an infected black ops agent, and a weapon that can slice through enemy limbs like a knife through butter, this looks set to be a slice of very adult fun.



**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to let
us know what
you're looking
forward to...

Fracture

Publisher: Lucasarts | **ETA:** Q2 2008

'Breaking new ground' is a phrase normally used to describe an innovative new concept. In Fracture's case it's a key gameplay mechanic, as you use your weapon-set to deform terrain, allowing you to dispatch enemies in clever new ways, but also to reach new areas. Looks gorgeous, too.

UPCOMING

Q1 2008

● Dark Messiah of Might and Magic: Elements

● Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Conviction

Q2 2008

● Hail To The Chimp

● Rock Band

Q3 2008

● Culdcept Saga

● White Gold: War In Paradise

● Fallout 3

● Prototype

● Ghostbusters

● Destroy All Humans: Path of the Furon

Q4 2008

● Postal III

● Borderlands

MASTER TIME TO
BECOME THE ULTIMATE WEAPON



5/5
MAXIM

TIMESHIFT

SLOW, STOP, AND REVERSE TIME.

COMING 2ND NOVEMBER



COMING SOON TO
PLAYSTATION 3

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Publisher: EA Games

Developer: Pandemic Studios

Heritage: Full Spectrum Warrior, Destroy All Humans!

Link: <http://www.mercs2.com/>

ETA: February 2008

HANDS ON

Mercenaries 2: World in Flames

Bang, bang, you're dead

The original Mercenaries - as its television advert proudly stated - was all about blowing the hell out of it, then blowing the hell out of it some more. Take that to its logical extreme, and you've got Mercenaries 2: World in Flames - a game where its predecessor's strapline of 'playground of destruction' is far more appropriate here. Pretty much everything you see can be destroyed. Vehicles, houses, even gigantic stone buildings can be reduced to piles of smoking rubble.

And considering how much flammable material or liquid is usually in the vicinity, you'll likely emerge from the wreckage with a literal 'world of flames' behind you.

As a sequel, Mercenaries 2 doesn't do an awful lot new, but then it didn't need to. The original Mercs was a generous helping of undiluted fun. In a day when most games are striving for issue-based realism, intense human emotion and moralistic soul-searching, World in Flames feels like a glorious

throwback to a time when games didn't worry about such things and just tried to provide non-stop entertainment. It's a lolloping Labrador of a game - lacking in the old brain department, but you can't help but love its infectious enthusiasm.

That's not to say that it doesn't have a sharp wit, or a striking self-awareness - Mercs 2 is a game that's never content unless it's poking fun at itself. As in the first game, you get to choose from three characters - bearded Swede

Mattias, described as 'the animal', femme fatale Jennifer, and self-styled leader Chris.

Jetting into Venezuela at the behest of one of your wealthy clients, it's up to you to perform tasks given by these rich organisations, take your pay-packet and get the hell out of there. But this time, rather than a series of separate maps, the South American setting is one huge sprawl, taking in tiny villages

These explosions are the norm rather than the exception in World in Flames. Expect fireworks.



"Vehicles and houses can be reduced to piles of smoking rubble"

Dropping a grenade inside a tank, then walking away as it explodes from the inside is hugely satisfying.



Destruction isn't scripted - so buildings will collapse differently each time you take them apart. Nice.





Many missions are fairly freeform, with a number of ways of completing the job rather than the more regimented approach of other games.



Changing allegiances is all part of a day's work for a mercenary - though don't swap sides too often, or they'll all be after you!

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to tell us what you think of Mercs 2

>Mercenaries 2 continued

with ramshackle huts to enormous skyscraper-filled cityscapes. While the name of the game may be similar in each area, the environmental differences mean you'll approach your missions quite differently.

The game is set during a fictional war between around five or six different factions, and you can choose to join forces with any of the battling armies to help your cause. If you find yourself on the losing side, you can even do a bit of dirty double-crossing and switch sides - though don't expect your former team-mates to treat you with any respect when you happen across them later...

Adding to the 'bigger, better, faster, more' approach, the weapon cache has been significantly expanded, with everything from semi-automatics to mini-nukes available. You can even use a simple match to set light to petrol spills and burn any nearby foes. And there are more vehicles to drive or fly

than before - though hijacking them is even more fun. Try grappling onto a helicopter from afar, then throwing the pilot to earth as you grab the controls - awesome.

While we're often going on about innovation and the need for new-generation games to expand upon their predecessors, this is one case where a bit more of the same isn't

"There's everything from semi-automatics to mini-nukes"

Mattias is as cool as a cucumber, even with a tank gun aimed at his head. Must be that icy Swedish temperament.



necessarily a bad thing. And with some tasty online options, a whole world full of buildings to destroy, and some of

the largest explosions you'll ever see, we're happy to keep on blowing the hell out of it some more, thanks. ●



360Zine



HOW COMPLETE?

80%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

85%

Pandemic's shooter is explosive entertainment



HANDS ON

The Club

Bizarre bring their racing know-how to the shooter genre.

The Club isn't your standard third-person shooter. While something like Gears of War might have you sprinting for cover, hugging a wall, before popping out to let off a quick round or two, Bizarre's blisteringly intense title will see you out in the open almost the entire time. For those who find themselves trying to run and gun their way through games and getting slaughtered by a hail of gunfire, The Club makes a refreshing change - after all, when you're NOT killing, you're

potentially losing valuable points.

And that's because The Club really isn't your standard third-person shooter. Instead of worriedly glancing at your health level and desperately trying to avoid being shot while you recover, The Club will have you charging madly into rooms, guns blazing, frantically trying to keep that combo ticking over. It's a game all about chaining - kill one opponent and you'll want to find the next one quickly as time starts running out on your multiplier. It's a game all about learning the levels - each game is a short, sharp

"The Club will have you charging madly into rooms, guns blazing"

shock rather than an epic blastathon, and you'll need to work out the best route through each stage. Scanning for skull signs to shoot (the only other way to maintain your combo), finding a steady flow of enemies, holding bullets back until the last possible second so you can leg it to the next area and pop a cap or three in the first bad guy that wanders into range. For such a simple, arcade experience, it's remarkably cerebral if you want to get the best possible score. More importantly, it's all about killing with style. Getting the most points involves some serious showboating - rolling out of cover and taking down two goons with a headshot and a

Toys for the boys - a rocket-launcher is handy for taking out multiple baddies in one go, but you'll struggle in the more confined areas.

Never underestimate the value of a good machete!

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of The Club

The Club's all about making an entrance - instead of quietly creeping into rooms, you charge in.

The action heats up in the steel mill - sometimes literally!

>The Club continued

ricochet will really make that multiplier mean something.

There are other serious considerations to take into account when going on a high-score run - like which character to choose from. Bizarre's community lead, Ben Ward, explains that "Dragov for example, has

"The Club has a confident swagger befitting a developer working at the top of its game"

bundles of Strength - so he can take lots of bullets - but his Speed and Stamina are low. So you won't be getting anywhere

fast." Given the nature of the combo system, some might want to pick a faster character and try to avoid bullets, but then at least Dragov is less likely to have to go searching for a health pack.

The Club is a game that has a lot of small influences, without ever feeling exactly like any one game you've played before. Perhaps the closest comparison is Resident Evil 4's fantastic bonus mode, The Mercenaries, The Club feels like its spiritual successor - it's a little deeper, a little faster, and has a confident swagger befitting a developer working at the top of its game. As Ward says "We've got a lot of experience in balancing the PGR and Geometry Wars games, which we've brought across to The Club. As the game is all about scoring points, so the targets the game sets must be both tough but achievable. Using a combination of iterative testing and automation, we've really refined our balancing process and The Club has benefited hugely from this."

Needless to say, we're in total agreement. With over two months to go until its release, The Club is already looking very close to the finished article. It offers base pleasures for gung-ho shooters, and an addictive score-

Each character has a very different personality, and the FMVs at the end of their stories are worth waiting for.

Pistols at dawn...

attack longevity for those who work at its surprisingly tactical combo system. This is one Club we're very keen on joining. ●

Even a chaingun struggles against shielded enemies - best to nip round the back and give them a bullet enema.

Visually, it's gritty yet still colourful. And it moves at one hell of a pace. It's no slouch in the looks department, that's for sure.

360Zine



HOW COMPLETE?

85%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

90%

A thrilling twist on shooter conventions

THE CLUB

As Community and Web Lead for Bizarre Creations, Ben Ward has spent as much time with The Club as anyone. He's used to dodging bullets, but we grabbed him before he could avoid our probing questions...



Ben Ward

Ben Ward, go to guy and all-round nice chap at Bizarre. He answered our queries in double-quick time.



The locations are stunningly detailed, with the steel mill being a particular visual highlight.

How did the concept for The Club come about?

The Club was created as an opportunity for Bizarre Creations to prove that we can do more than racing games. We wanted to build a AAA title in another genre, and third-person shooting was the popular vote with the team. There's a lot of competition in this area, and we decided early on that we would do something very original - not just another storyline-based game. Initially the idea was to do the same thing as we did with PGR; bring scoring to a shooter in the same way as we did with Kudos to racing. The Club has been refined heavily since then, but that initial concept idea still pretty much sums it up.

The game's mechanics are far removed from any other shooter -

indeed, it plays more like a racing game. Did your experience with the PGR series make developing such an idea easier?

Yes it did. We've approached the development of The Club in a fundamentally different way to many other shooters. We've built the environments in the same way as we did with the cities in PGR - our teams went out on research trips, took thousands of photographs and video, and then came back to Bizarre to


design and build them. It's true that the locations in The Club aren't real-life places like they are in our racing titles, but they're built in the same way and to the same level of detail.

It should have incredible replay value with its rather old-school high-score-beating approach. Were you influenced by any score-attack games in particular?

We often compare parts of the



"We decided early on that we would do something very original - not just another storyline-based game"



Adding to the tension are shielded enemies - not helpful when your combo's about to run out.

> Interview continued

game to Tony Hawks (for the scoring and combo systems), Doom speed runs (for pure adrenaline and maintaining forward motion), Street Fighter (for the tournament layout and character selection), and PGR (for the new style of game modes and replayability). As it stands, The Club is quite a unique proposition and one which we hope will be the basis of



The Club represents a huge departure for Bizarre, but it seems like they've pulled it off brilliantly.

games to be compared to in the future.

Can you tell us more about the different characters in the game, and how the game will play differently with each of them?

There are eight characters in The Club, each with a different backstory, nationality, and vital statistics. From a storyline perspective they are handled in a very similar way to Street Fighter or Dead or Alive. You choose a character to take through the Tournament mode, and if you reach the ending you'll receive an outro FMV. As for gameplay, each character plays very differently. There are three statistics - Speed, Strength, and Stamina - each of which affects how that

"For gamers who like both the adrenaline of a racer and the precision of a shooter"

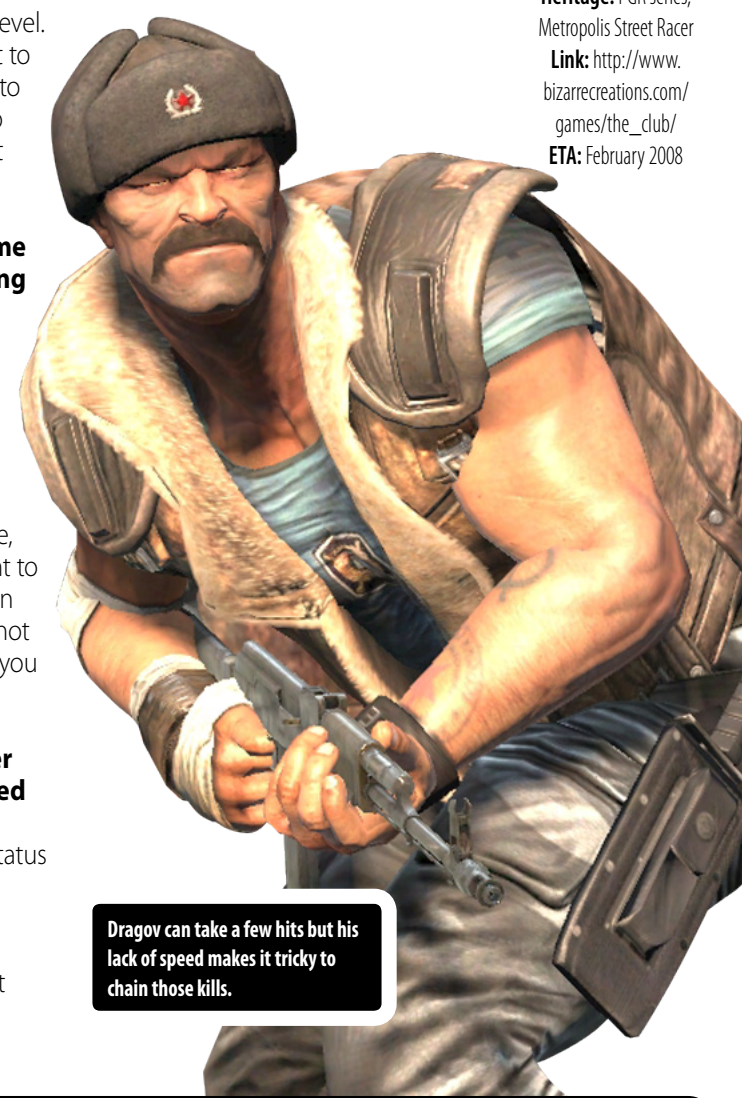
character can approach a level. This is especially important to consider when you take into account The Club's combo system, which rewards fast and efficient kills.

Are you hoping the game will appeal to both racing and shooter fans?

Well we're really hoping that The Club will have its own brand of fans - gamers who like both the adrenaline of a racer and the precision of a shooter. The main challenge for us is to get the game into people's hands in the first place, either with a demo or video content to explain the game's concept. You can talk about The Club all day, but it's not until you really have a go on it that you understand how it all fits together.

Finally, will there be yet another version of Geometry Wars tucked away somewhere?

No. It's outgrown its "mini-game" status - especially with Geometry Wars Galaxies on the way. Don't get me wrong... we're still planning future versions of Geometry Wars. You just won't see these in The Club. ●



Dragov can take a few hits but his lack of speed makes it tricky to chain those kills.

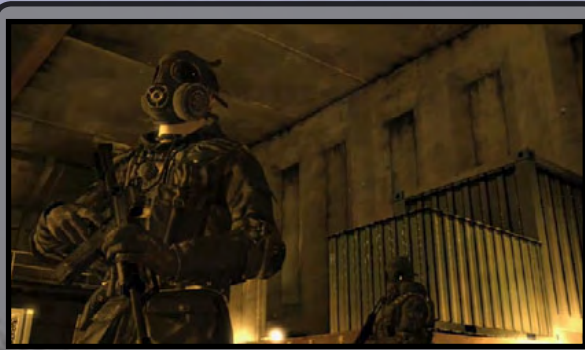


Publisher: Sega
Developer: Bizarre Creations

Heritage: PGR series, Metropolis Street Racer

Link: http://www.bizarrecreations.com/games/the_club/

ETA: February 2008



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Mass Effect

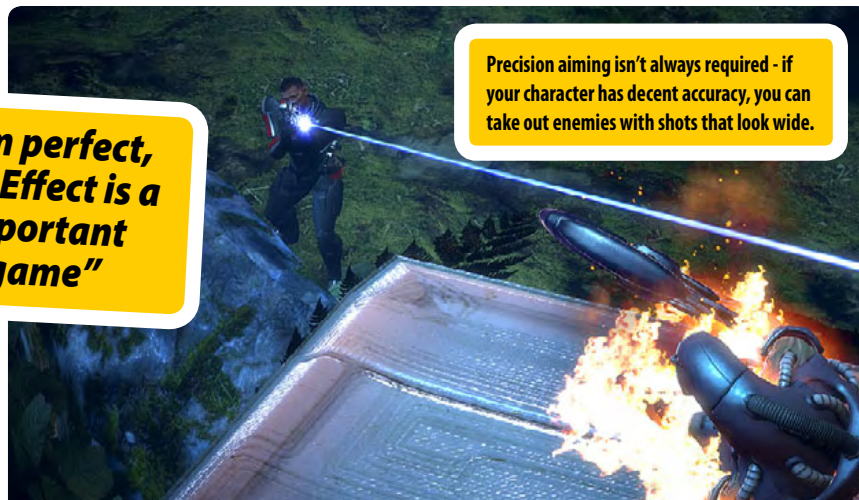
A galaxy far, far away...

There's so much to say about Mass Effect, so let's not mince words and get straight to the point. You play as Commander Shepard - whose christian name and gender can be selected by the player, with his/her appearance fully customisable through a detailed facial construction tool at the outset. You can also choose Shepard's background - will your avatar have been orphaned when young and raised in a

military lifestyle? Or will they have spent most of their lives as a colonist? This has more of an impact than you might think, with dialogue varying according to your history. Once you've provided a bit of background, you can pick which area they will excel in - soldiers are fearsome combatants, making the most of their extensive weapons training, while you can also specialise in biotics or

technology - the former has a number of biologically-enhanced, almost superpower-like skills, while the latter can affect robot foes or any other electronic equipment in the vicinity. Again, these choices affect your experience more than you'd think - anyone playing the game using only weapons will have a vastly different game to those who vary the

Husks are the zombies of the piece, rushing at you in numbers with little intelligence. Pretty scary, too.



Precision aiming isn't always required - if your character has decent accuracy, you can take out enemies with shots that look wide.

"Far from perfect, but Mass Effect is a very important videogame"

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

I'm an alien, I'm a legal alien



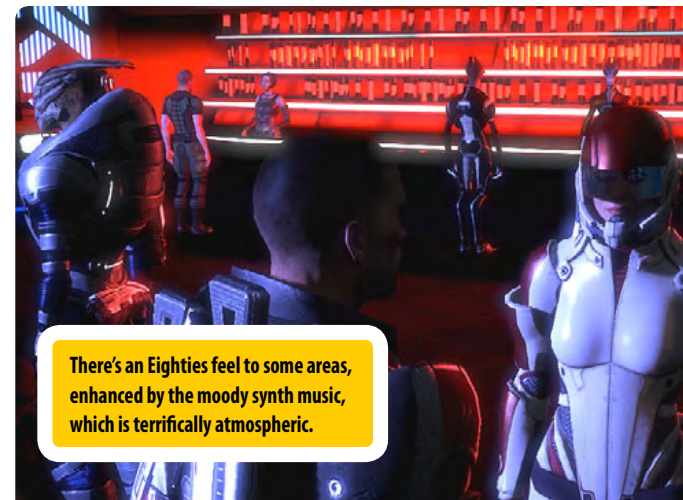
Good

Bad

Ugly

Good

Another brilliant thing about Mass Effect is that lines are constantly blurred between who is good and who isn't. Seemingly innocent characters have murky pasts, and you can even make Shepard unsympathetic, with certain choices progressing you towards 'renegade' status.



There's an Eighties feel to some areas, enhanced by the moody synth music, which is terrifically atmospheric.



You can repair your Mako if it gets damaged, though you have to pull to a halt.

> Mass Effect continued

protagonist's powers.

Combat is more action-based than the Bioware norm - though there's a good degree of strategy involved, if you'd rather hang back and give orders. Your squad members (again, each of which vary significantly in their skillset) display some of the most impressive friendly AI you'll ever see - frequently helping you out of tight spots and rarely requiring detailed direction if you'd rather leave them to their own

devices. The beauty of the system is that it can be played as an almost Gears-esque third-person shooter, but also customised to the nth detail to create an incredibly deep system. You can select the type of weapon your partners will use, time when they use their special powers and how often, decide when to heal or be healed, or direct operations from cover. It's an incredible thrill to watch a team-mate use biotic powers to hurl an opponent into the air and pepper their falling body with bullets.

Nobody is fat in the future. And codpieces make a comeback.



Combat is one of the areas in which the game excels, but the story somehow manages to top that. It's definitely best experienced cold - we got a detailed list of plot points we weren't allowed to mention - but we wouldn't want to. It can be a little hard to follow the incidental details - names of alien species and planets are frequently thrown at you with little time to process them - but the main >

PRO-BIOTICS

Experience Bioware's very own Battlestar Galactica



1 HOUR

A vicious bar fight can end particularly badly for your enemy if you bring a certain someone along.



3 HOURS

Blasting off on the Normandy - leaving the Citadel and exploring the galaxy



8 HOURS

A rebel alliance - helping out some survivors before you're caught off guard with a sneaky twist



12 HOURS

The intense assault on Virmire - a real standout, with an emotional sucker punch.



18 HOURS

Main story over, but there's a whole universe to explore. You'll want to do it all over again.

Nothing's ever entirely straightforward - missions will develop in a way that feels truly organic, even though it's all pre-scripted. It's a convincing illusion.



> Mass Effect continued

story thread is simple and strong enough to be utterly compelling. Even better is the dialogue - the game offers fully voiced conversations with nearly every character, and there's an

incredible array of responses, with some requiring serious thought. There are several mini-dilemmas throughout, but there is one moment that forces you to make a choice that you'll agonise over - it makes Bioshock's 'harvest or save?' look like a This

Morning quiz question. While the game can get very talky in places, it's helped by some absolutely phenomenal facial animation that brings every chat to vivid life. Leave Shepard alone for a minute, and he/she will sway gently, blinking and subtly shifting eye contact. The graphics on the whole are impressive, though there are some issues with texture draw-in and slowdown when battles get hectic.

That's one of the two main flaws in the game, the other being that the side-missions are generally pretty awful. There are other minor niggles too, but they're tiny specks on a giant canvas. Mass Effect might have its idiosyncrasies and longueurs, but its intoxicating universe is so rich in detail and character that such criticisms are nit-picking at best and downright unreasonable at worst.

When considering what makes a classic videogame, it seems that those who've earned that title fall into two very distinct groups. There are those that refine a well-worn template to the nth degree, never truly innovating but mastering every single area to a level where it reaches the pinnacle of its genre. Call of Duty 4 being a case in point, and a very strong contender for Game of the Year. The other type is different - usually suffering from a few flaws, it overcomes its problems

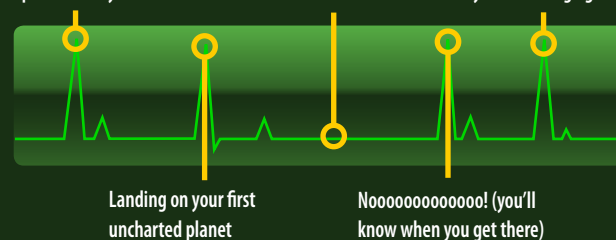
"The main story thread is simple and strong enough to be utterly compelling"

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

Phantom Menace council politics - only better

Terrible robot-monkey side mission

Finishing the awesome story and starting again



through a number of factors, the main one being that it progresses its genre in hugely significant ways. Mass Effect falls firmly under the

latter category - it's far from perfect, but feels like a very important videogame. It makes giant strides not just in terms of RPGs but videogames as a whole. In the coming years it will be rightly revered as a game that progressed the medium, with Bioware feted for their efforts in creating one of the most inspiring digital experiences of the decade. ● **Chris Schilling**



360Zine Verdict

Both massive and effective, Bioware's space opera is epic in every sense

- Astonishingly detailed virtual universe
- Amazing characters, and emotion
- Tiny niggles jar, and poor side-quests

93%

A hero never dies



 [REPLAY THIS VIDEO](#)

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Microsoft
game studios

BUNGIE

xbox.com/halo3

HALO 3

BELIEVE

26th September 2007

Jump in.





Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare



The vintage war epic gets dragged into the future, kicking and screaming

The Call of Duty series has come to dominate all games based around World War II, leaving no rivals on the horizon. Medal of Honor was eventually crippled by Call of Duty and few game developers dared to join the bloody fight. Rumbling on to new territory, the Call of Duty series has dramatically switched from Nazi Germany to the near-future and locked laser guided sniper sights on the likes of Rainbow Six and Ghost Recon.

Aside from bearded Sergeant Price

from the previous games, a new team of soldiers make up the SAS team which you'll play during the dramatic opening scenes of the game. It's the usual story of Russia, Iraq and American leaders playing poker with nuclear weapons but it's done with such style, Call of Duty 4 has a better beginning than many Hollywood films. The opening credits, cut scenes and music mimic the intro of an episode of 24, twinned with the kind of brooding suspense of a Tom Clancy film like Clear

& Present Danger.

After a brilliant training session which asks you to attend a shooting range and storm a building, you get dropped on an enemy ship in a storm by a helicopter. The thumping theme tune is composed by the man behind the Metal Gear Solid theme and there's a definite similarity in the opening level and the adventures of Solid Snake in Metal Gear Solid 2. It's a quick fire level featuring rain, huge flames and a swaying boat. A few minutes later, you'll be off the ship and gasping for breath, gawping at the voice actor credits. The relentless pace is incredible. Even when you've shot enemies, they'll crawl and aim at your balls and the frantic team chatter is flawless. Shouts of 'clear!' and 'enemy in the open!' can be heard over deafening gunfire and enemy screams.

The rapid action is made even more enjoyable by the intuitive Halo style controls. Crouch behind cover to recover from an attack and pick your grenades carefully to cause maximum damage. Weapons are

HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL

You'll see the world (and the bottom of a bog) in the international locales of Call of Duty 4.



The Forest

The Plane

The War-zone

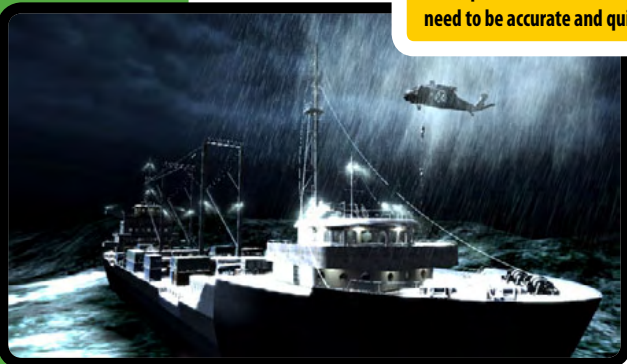
The Forest

Weeds, bogs and farmhouses make up the environment. Sneaking around is the order of the day. When crawling fails, massive gunfights occur often with air support. The best bit is the huge glass green house which collapses when the bullets begin to fly.



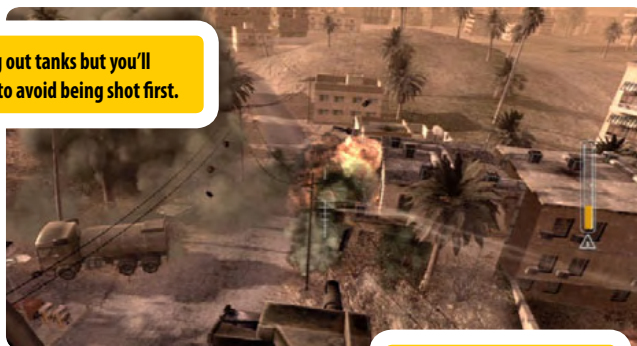
The enemies are clever and hide, flank and ambush at any opportunity.

Helicopters are ideal for taking out tanks but you'll need to be accurate and quick to avoid being shot first.



> CoD4 continued

based around a mix of real guns like Uzis and AK47s and futuristic weapons, though each has a meaty impact and you'll never be short of bullets. Much like BLACK on the original Xbox, Call of Duty 4 has studied the mechanics of what makes shooting someone in the balls (as opposed to the head) sickeningly satisfying. There's no shortage of blood on both sides either. For every injured and shuffling enemy, you'll see a team mate blown sideways by a grenade, rocket or tank blast.



Taking charge of the RPG launcher is an honour but a risk too.



"Flinchingly realistic in a way we haven't seen since the beginning of Saving Private Ryan"

Likewise, the disturbing sound of bullets piercing kevlar jackets and blood spatter is flinchingly realistic in a way we haven't seen since the beginning of Saving Private Ryan.

Moving from England to a ship in the Atlantic to conflicts in the Middle East and Russia, there's a good mix of

This is not the time to start dancing, Private.



stealth missions mixed with time based challenges and levels which ask you to find cover and despatch an army of soldiers with a helicopter and bombs. The action is always hectic but to help things along, the compass at the bottom of the screen acts as a radar directing you to the next objective. It's not intrusive, and you'll only look >

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

On a mission...



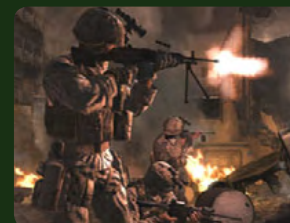
Enter Abbasia Square, admiring the great smoke effects and try to understand what the hell is going on.



Find cover and use the smoke as cover from enemy helicopters - you'll feel outnumbered at this point.



Follow your team mates, firing as you go. They know what they're doing.



Group together and kill as many troops as you can while avoiding grenades.



Call for help, order the airstrike and watch the sparks fly!



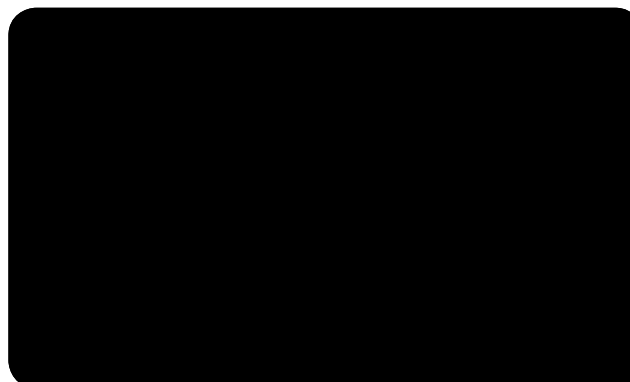
In the heat of battle, you won't know where to shoot. Hide for a few seconds and hope that things calm down a bit as playing the hero will get you killed in 0.4 seconds.



Before you take out the little men on foot, you'll need to kill their tanks with rockets. Aim, fire, wait and then see the massive cloud of smoke.



Walls will begin to crumble or fall down with sustained fire. Rockets or grenades will destroy them completely.

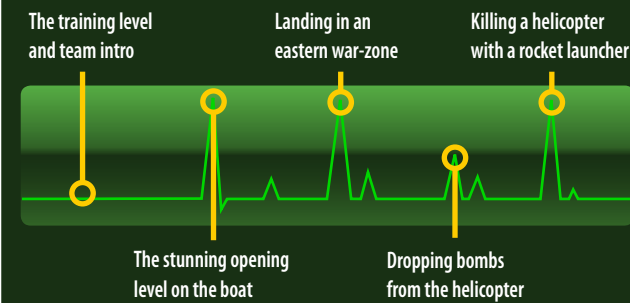


The stealth scenes are the most fun - the trees and weeds become your cover and team mates become your lead. Just don't shoot them.

> CoD4 continued

at it when lost in the vast landscapes, but it's a small revelation which allows the action to speed along at a breakneck pace. Push down on the left stick and you'll holster your weapon and run after team mates and leap over rivers, broken walls and corpses. The themes and levels might seem clichéd but they've never been created in such detail or with so many bricks, barrels and bombs to play with. Later stealth levels feature roaming spotlights and troublesome dogs, and reveal stealth kills and the perverse joy of shooting a dozing enemy with a suppressed weapon.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



As a single player game, Call of Duty 4 is superb and is more original and exciting than the campaign mode in Halo 3. Call of Duty 4 is better looking too, and up there with Gears of War when it comes to jaw dropping visuals. In multiplayer, there's a wealth of options and while the action might feel bewildering at first, you soon get used to the pace after Halo's sluggish movements. At a time when Halo 3 and The Orange Box are vying for your cash, it's time to take a serious look at what type of game you want to play. If you want a gritty, gorgeous and harrowing shooter with a campaign mode so good you'll play it at least twice, Call of Duty 4 needs you. ●

Richard Melville

360Zine Verdict

The best single player shooter on Xbox 360, no contest.

- 👍 Incredible visuals
- 👍 Fast, intuitive and clever controls
- 👎 We can't wait for the next update!

95%

PCGZine

**SUPREME COMMANDER:
FORGED ALLIANCE**

Big stampy robot RTS fun is back

CRYSIS

Only on PC, the best looking shooter ever

UNREAL TOURNAMENT III

A final preview of the sure-fire hit

PLUS: F.E.A.R PM, WITCHER & MORE

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PCGZine Issue 12

Your monthly PC games magazine





Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Ubisoft
Montreal

Heritage: Splinter Cell
series

Link: <http://assassinscreed.uk.ubi.com/experience/>
OUT NOW

Assassin's Creed

Stab, sneak and pickpocket in a virtual world of beggars and believers

Assassin's Creed is a very different game to any you will have played before. Instead of the usual violence or epilepsy disclaimer that opens most games, Assassin's Creed informs you that the development team possess many different religions and faiths.

Why? Because the adventure centres around groups of believers, assassins and village beggars in ancient recreations of Damascus and Jerusalem. You play Altair (an assassin in a past life) and enter this ancient world through a time travelling machine that interprets

memory through the DNA of Altair's present day form - a reformed criminal who claims to be a bartender. The people forcing you to go on your virtual journey are seeking a secret buried in your brain. These people are a strange duo of a mad professor and a sweet lab girl, played by Kristen Bell out

"The most convincing and free roaming world ever to appear in a game"

of Heroes.

Step into the machine and the virtual world looks incredible. Even after Bioshock and the amazing Call of Duty 4, Assassin's Creed dazzles. It's the most convincing and free roaming world ever to appear in a game. Think GTA meets Robin Hood. Villagers can be shunted, stabbed and will openly comment on your amazing free running skills. Climbing buildings like Spider-Man in a flowing white robe, the villages looks vast and are open for exploration although the path through the game is very linear.



GIRL POWER

The 2 girls behind the game, revealed



Jade Raymond



Kristen Bell
(the in-game one)



Kristen Bell
(the real one)



Jade Raymond

This is Assassin's Creed producer and Ubisoft pin-up Jade Raymond. Ubisoft wheel her out at any point because she's a game developer who doesn't own a beard, AC/DC tee shirt or a subscription to Playboy. We can't argue with that, really.

It's the leap of faith you've been waiting to make.



Assassin's Creed is now the best looking game on Xbox 360 - beating Gears of War and Call of Duty 4.



THIS MEANS WAR!

Just one hour in and a mini war kicks off...



When an enemy army invade your village, run for high ground...



Kick down enemies and stab their standing friends, then come back for seconds.



Reach high ground and press B to grab an enemy and then throw him around...



And this is the viewpoint that dying enemies will see when you throw them off the edge.



Kill enemies by unleashing a flood of logs and mop up the others with your sword.

There's not as much sneaking as you might think, but this is still a fun way of getting around.

> Assassin's Creed continued

Missions revolve around simplified seek and destroy, seek and eavesdrop and seek and steal objectives. Between levels, the plot will cut back to your character held captive in the science lab which despite being a bit of a gimmick, does offer a decent plot line which keeps you interested.

The most appealing aspect of Assassin's Creed after the stunning village scenes is the control method.

You can gently nudge crowds, hit A to adopt an inconspicuous pose and leap, grab and swing around the world seamlessly. High beams can be tackled by creeping along them like a skilled tight rope walker and doing so actually prompts a feeling of vertigo. Similarly, giant 'leaps of faith' can be performed, providing there's a soft haystack to break your fall.

In terms of originality, Assassin's Creed is a brave step towards a new type of adventure. With such vast environments and numerous abilities, it's a shame you can't really free roam as much as you'd like. There's an unshakable feeling that Altair is part of a film rather than a game but, luckily, the plot is enticing enough to keep you interested, even if it is a bit Da Vinci Code at points.

The real success of Assassin's Creed is laying down the vast environment which makes previous GTA games look like adventures in Legoland. The crowds and living universe is something that creators Ubisoft are currently working into the new Splinter Cell game and, although Assassin's

"Assassin's Creed is a brave step towards a new type of adventure"

Creed seems like a trial run of the innovation, it's a great adventure. For those who want a Tomb Raider style adventure with added depth and role playing leanings, Assassin's Creed is ideal. It can be slow paced at times but as an adventure which lets you suck in the scenery and marvel at the wizardry of Xbox 360, there's no better game to woo your mates with.

Richard Melville



360Zine Verdict

A gorgeous, involving adventure which manages to intrigue

- Huge, amazing villages
- You'll feel part of the universe
- Linear missions and structure

86%

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Need For Speed Pro Street

So this is Christmas...

In many ways the Cliff Richard of videogames, EA's perennial yuletide number one is rapidly becoming as hoary and predictable as the twinkle-toothed God-botherer himself. Whereas Sir Cliff annually churns out some combination of mistletoe, wine and good cheer, NFS brings the same old mix of racing styles to the table.

Whether it's offroad, onroad, in the city, in the valley, being chased by cops, being ignored by cops, you pretty much know what you're going to get.

This time round it's more of a Christmas compilation than ever, as the back catalogue is shamelessly trawled for 'inspiration.' So you've got



Jaunty angle not included.

Publisher: EA
Developer: EA
Heritage: NFS series
Link: www.needforspeed.com
OUT NOW



Race Days take place in different countries.

standard 'Grip' races, timed affairs, drift races, drag races and so on, all thrown together under the auspices of a Race Day, replete with irritating DJs, EA Trax and scantily clad flag-waving women. As an indictment of modern day gaming, it's a depressingly homogenised setting that drains your will to live before you've even picked up the controller.

It only improves marginally from there, with some pedestrian racing, leaden handling and cars that have the turning circle of the QE2. If you've never played a Need for Speed game before you might be mildly entertained by the drag racing, which requires little more skill than changing gear at the correct time, or the drift races, which involve driving in an irresponsible manner (or copying Outrun). Ironically, what's initially lacking is any semblance of

LIFE'S A DRAG

Last one pays for the tyres...



Burn



Clutch



Line



Burn

When competing in drag racing, first warm your tyres to the optimum temperature.



Actual speed may differ.



Loads of real cars and that.



The bonnet view is quite useful.

"Design your own Race Days and challenge your friends to compete in them"



Pro Street, with optional racing line.



You are Ryan Cooper, and you are third.

> Need for Speed continued

speed, although this is rectified later on with the Speed Challenges, requiring you to tear along a strip of road at over 100 miles per hour.

Career Opportunities

The Race Days come thick and fast via an abysmally designed front end, with success opening up a career path leading to so-called Showdowns with various stupidly-named pretend drivers. You have no choice but to be Ryan Cooper, although this does at least allow the race commentator to namecheck you, particularly when you write off your car.

New cars geared to particular events become available on the way, and they can be tweaked in terms of performance, with the blueprint then shareable online. In fact online appears to be where a lot of the focus is, as you

can design your own Race Days and challenge your friends – or complete strangers – to compete in them.

As a single player game though, this year's model seems to be sorely lacking in ideas, with a mishmash of previous games thrown together and disguised with a bit of tit & arse and in-your-face presentation. The 360 is host to some decent racing titles, and it would be a very unfussy gamer who would choose

this over PGR4 or Forza 2.

That is exactly what they will do though, and at the time of writing Pro Street is even money to be the fifth Need For Speed Christmas number one in the last six years. To be honest, if you want to be Scrooge-like about it you could pick up any of those titles and probably have as much fun. Or just get Cliff's Greatest Hits...

Steve Hill

360Zine Verdict

Some speed, no real need.

- Online options
- Hateful presentation
- Tired gameplay

65%

Scene It? Lights, Camera, Action

There's a bit of a Buzz about this one...

Let's not beat around the bush here - Scene It? is Microsoft's attempt to 'do' Buzz - the PS2's family-friendly (and really quite popular) quiz series. In fact, they share so many similarities, we'd be surprised if Sony wasn't getting in touch with its lawyers right about now. The controllers are very similar, the structure of the game is near-identical, and they're both presented by annoying idiots who repeat themselves constantly and make you wish you had an option to turn them off. Grr.

In truth, that's being a little harsh on the controllers, which are probably the best thing about the game. As befits a peripheral named Big Button Controller

(yep, really), you have a large circular button at the top, with the 360's standard four coloured face buttons arranged vertically underneath. They're wireless, running off 2 AA batteries each (thoughtfully, MS has included eight with the game - nice touch), and utilise an infra-red USB hub which reads any and all button presses. Most importantly they're really nicely designed, both aesthetically pleasing and comfortable to hold. It's nice to be able to sit back on the sofa and just roughly aim at the telly, and unlike Buzz there's no untangling of pesky wires before the game begins. Good stuff.

Upon starting the game you'll be offered the choice of Play Now or Party

Play, we unwisely chose the latter, thinking that was the optimum start point for a multiplayer game. How wrong we were. This mode is essentially endless, and purportedly ideal for parties where people can dip in and out of the game as they wish, shouting out answers and so forth. As soon as we read the instructions and realised the game wasn't going to finish any time soon, we reverted to a Short Play game, which gives you around twenty minutes' worth of three different puzzle types, with Long Play taking over twice as long, and choosing from five different sections. The different rounds involved vary from anagrams of film titles to viewing a

BUFF OR ROUGH?

Do you know your Scarlett Johanssons from your Scarlett O' Haras?



Distorted reality

Invisibles

Pictograms

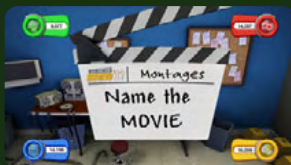
Distorted reality

One of the trickier rounds, this. Tiny square pieces of a static picture swirl around in a globe, and you have to guess the actor or film underneath. Press the big button to buzz in and select from one of the four answers.

"The Big Button Controller is both aesthetically pleasing and comfortable to hold"

MOVIE STAR

Testing your knowledge of the Hollywood elite



10 MINUTES

Starting a game on Party Play. No menus, no instructions, just straight in.



2 HOURS

Still playing Party Play. Oh no - it's endless! No wonder we're piling on the points.



5 HOURS

Four mates on Long or Short Play mode and Scene It? becomes a blast. Especially with beer.



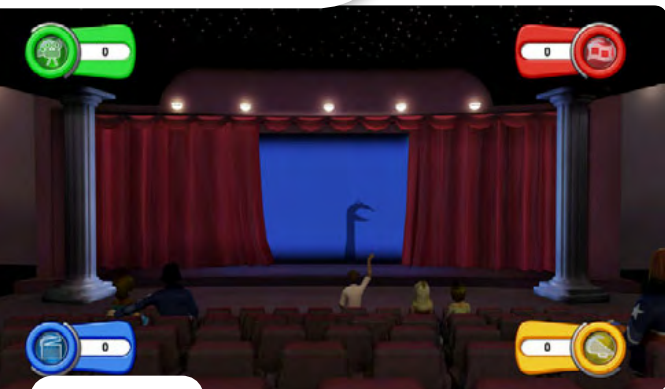
8 HOURS

Questions are starting to repeat themselves now, but it's still enticing the non-gamers.



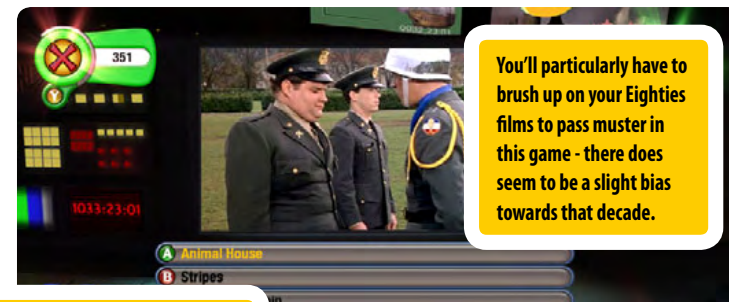
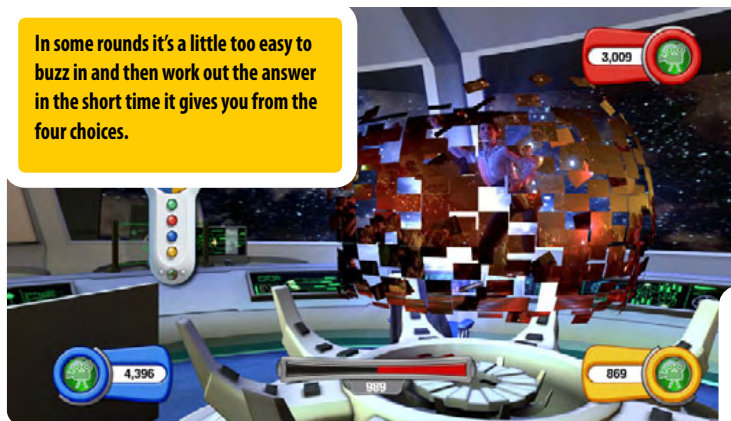
12 HOURS PLUS

You'll return to this every now and again when you've got friends or family round.



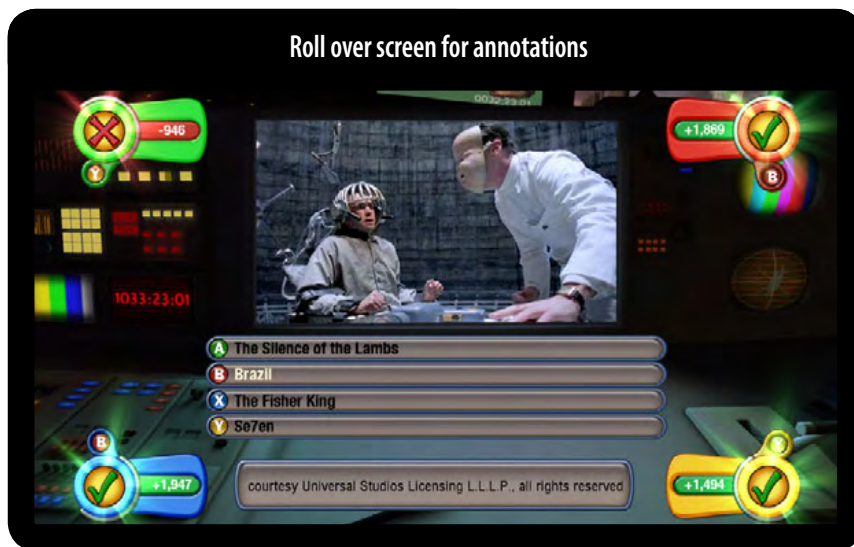
The potted animations between each section are short but can annoy.

In some rounds it's a little too easy to buzz in and then work out the answer in the short time it gives you from the four choices.



You'll particularly have to brush up on your Eighties films to pass muster in this game - there does seem to be a slight bias towards that decade.

The controllers in all their glory. They're not quite as shiny in the flesh, but we love 'em. Even comfier than a Wii remote.



Roll over screen for annotations

"There's around 1800 questions in total"

The aforementioned 'host' does his best to drag you down with his unfunny, repetitive soundbites, but they're mercifully brief. One nice feature is that players can receive bonus points at the end of the round, ranging from the fastest answer to most correct answers in a row. Though, in the main, all this does is put any experts among your friends or family in even more of an unassailable lead.

It remains to be seen whether Scene It? can really help Microsoft attract that casual audience that Nintendo has so successfully mined of late, but expect to see this in a few Christmas stockings in a month's time. And with a bit of luck, its controllers will go on to bigger and better things, too.

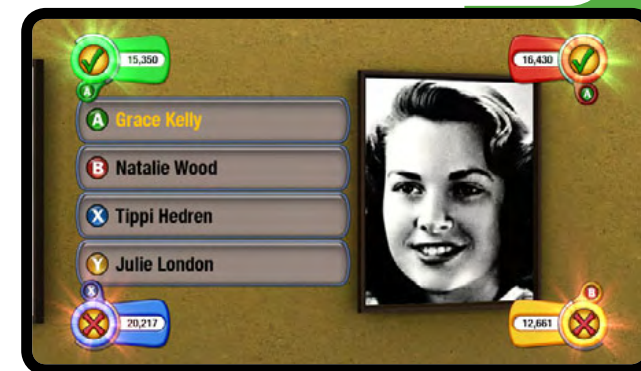
Chris Schilling

> Scene It? continued

short clip and answering questions on it. Or you might have to look at a still shot of a film with the actors removed, or guess which film a sound clip is from. All in all, there are over twenty types of round, which is an impressive amount of variety, and the game stores questions which have already been asked so you're less likely to hear them

again. There's around 1800 questions in total, though it wouldn't surprise us if more were made available over the Marketplace as downloadable content.

Presentationally, the game is a little bland. The camera will swoop and pan through various areas of a film set, eventually settling for a static background for each set of questions.



360Zine Verdict

Filmic fun for four - Scene It is a very familiar, but very enjoyable party game

- Clips look good in high-definition
- Controllers are superb
- Irritating host; Party Play is tedious

78%



Ace Combat 6: Fires of Liberation

Publisher: Namco Bandai
Developer: Namco Bandai
Heritage: Ace Combat 5,
Soul Calibur
Link: www.acecombat.eu
OUT NOW

This isn't falling, it's flying - with style

If you're a fan of flight sims, the past few years have been like hell. With the genre all but dying a death, arcadey things like Blazing Angels passing themselves off as simulators, and tosh like Over G putting many off for life, flight sims on 360 have been in desperate need of a breath of fresh air - a revitalisation; something to prove that the genre still has what it takes, and

that people all around the world are still fixated with the idea of pretending to be a fighter pilot, zipping in and out of virtual clouds, humming the theme from Top Gun as they go.

Step in, Ace Combat 6.

The once PlayStation loyal series has had a bit of a change as of late, making the jump to become a 360 exclusive, and sticking a finger up at Sony in the

process. With an all new suite of multiplayer modes, an incredibly story-driven campaign, and, of course, a slick visual overhaul, Ace Combat truly is a flight sim of Gods. And what a sim it is.

Sitting in the cockpit of your plane, with 5.1 sound cranked up to the max, you can really lose yourself in the moment - jumping as missiles hit you, desperately cranking back on your



ACE'S LIVE

Take to the skies online



Co-op



Siege



Death-match



Co-op

This is the first Ace Combat game to feature an online mode, and, much like the rest of the game, it's a spectacular addition. By far the best mode available is the co-op mode, which lets you take to the sky with up to three friends in tow!



Words can't really describe
how amazing this looks.

> **Ace Combat 6** continued

analogue stick to avoid the ground as yet another bullet shakes your rickety chunk of metal to bits. While hardcore simmers may argue that Ace Combat isn't realistic enough to be classed as a sim, the game delivers authenticity in just the right amounts, bringing with it a perfectly accessible flight model, fully 3D virtual cockpits, and an expansive selection of the latest military hardware.

The story behind Ace Combat is a bit of a weird one, as, although you'll sit through many cutscenes, what they're showing actually has very little to do with the action. Viewing the war through the eyes of several characters, you'll mostly be following the trials and tribulations of Melissa, her daughter Matilda, and her fighter pilot husband as they fight to be reunited during the invasion of their country, Gracemeria. With all sorts of super-weapons, and flying fortresses that bear a striking resemblance to Captain Scarlet's Cloudbase popping up in the missions, Ace Combat's campaign is as over the

"Fast and furious, exhilarating and exhausting, Ace Combat 6 captures the thrill of flight"

top as it is exciting, and the game's all the better for it.

Speaking of the missions, the campaign mode has had a radical overhaul for number 6, seeing the addition of individual "operations" in several missions. These mini-missions are basically glorified objectives, which you have to complete a certain number of to finish the mission - whether that be bombing an enemy column of tanks, covering an AWACS plane, or simply dogfighting with your enemy in the skies.

But like it as we do, we do still have a few niggles with Ace Combat - though few and far between they are. The inability to accurately control your speed - like you could on the PS2 - is a downer (you're restricted to simply squeezing triggers to boost or brake),



and we're disappointed with the length of the campaign, which, at just 15 missions, can be completed in three or four sittings, though the multiple objectives do add some replay value.

Fast and furious, exhilarating and exhausting, Ace Combat 6 captures the thrill of flight for those of us too scared to leave the ground. A must buy for all flight sim fans. ● **Ian Morris**

**360Zine
Verdict***Takes our breath away*

- 👍 Fantastic sense of flight
- 👍 Great online
- 👎 Too short

88%**FLYING
HIGH***Moments in time
inside the cockpit***5 MINS**

Training can be boring, but for the sim novice, it's essential.

**15 MINS**

The opening mission above Gracemeria is stunning.

**30 MINS**

Cutscenes are a bit confusing, but convey the story well.

**1 HOUR**

Delving into the online mode is a revelation.

**2 HOURS**

Ploughing through story mode, wondering about the operations you've missed.

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Xbox Live Arcade Round-Up

As the XBLA has its 100th release, we tell you what's worth your cash, and what to avoid.



It's all too easy to get on a roll with Switchball

Switchball

Developer: Atomic Elbow Publisher: Sierra Online Price: 800 MP (~£6.80)

Switchball is a game that borrows heavily from Marble Blast Ultra, bar for one huge addition - physics. As you roll through each of the levels, you can trundle through certain gates that will change your marble into a variety of different types, whether it be the heavyweight metal one, which will let you push boxes out of the way, or the "air" ball, which makes it easier to climb steep hills, but makes you susceptible to wind. While the levels are all nicely varied, with a

decent selection of puzzles that'll really make you think about your route through the course, we couldn't help but feel it's all a bit slow, and a tad too similar to Marble Blast.

- Nice courses
- Good physics
- Feels like we've played it before

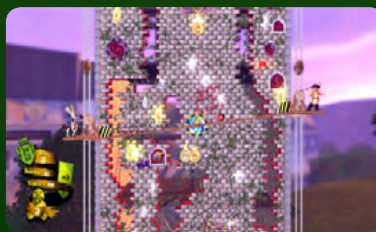
Play for keepsies

74%

Shrek-n-Roll

Developer: Backbone Entertainment
Publisher: Activision Price: 800 MP (~£6.80)

Letting you "play" as any one of 24 characters from the films, the game utilises an... interesting dual-analogue system, that's trickier to use than it is to explain. With one character on each end of a plank, and a pulley attached to each end, it's up to you to raise a plank against a wall, guiding an item of food through the course to one of Shrek's babies. With each analogue stick raising a different end of the plank, you'll have to roll the foodstuff between the two of you, before getting it to the hungry mouth. Interesting but lacking in execution.



- Movie authenticity
- Too hard to control
- Too similar

Cheap movie tie-ins ahoy

54%



Mutant Storm Empire

Developer: Pom Pom Games
Publisher: Pom Pom Games Price: 800 MP (~£6.80)

Mutant Storm Empire is the sequel to Mutant Storm Reloaded - the only game to give Geometry Wars a run for its money in the shooter stakes. Firstly, the graphics have been given a huge overhaul, making each area look gorgeous, and there are now all sorts of new beastie bonuses you can get for killing the same type of enemy in a row. Boss fights, too, are as challenging as ever, and the game's unrelenting difficulty remains intact. In co-op, or alone, this is amazing.

- Pure blasting action
- Great new look
- Not enough of it

Join the Empire

88%

Screwjumper

Developer: Frozen Codebase Publisher: THQ
Price: 800 MP (~£6.80)

Screwjumper puts you into the dusty boots of a renegade miner, who's lost his job at the hands of an evil alien corporation. Obviously, your only option is to dive, headfirst into the caverns that the aliens are now mining, crashing through objects as you go, before lobbing a stick of dynamite into the core, and sending the aliens packing. Unfortunately, it's not anywhere near as much fun to play as it sounds, thanks to some awful controls, and a really bizarre system which sees you losing health if you choose to accelerate.



- Simple gameplay
- Bizarre, inaccurate controls
- Not enough variety

It's the 80s all over again

65%

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